

Regional Council Activity Report

July 25, 2007



Executive Director's Report

At its July meeting, the MAG Regional Council approved the five-year Transportation Improvement Program and the annual update to the Regional Transportation Plan. These planning documents are critical in moving forward all major transportation projects in the region to accommodate our fast-paced growth.

What stands out about the 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is that the number of projects has increased 14 percent from the previous TIP, representing an investment in this region of about \$7.7 billion. The freeway program alone is about \$3.9 billion over the next five years.

The 2008-2012 TIP includes 677 street projects, 314 transit projects, 177 freeway projects, 90 Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) projects, 93 bicycle and pedestrian projects, 47 air quality or travel demand management projects, 21 bridge projects and 8 "other" projects. The program represents an incredible amount of construction activity for the region, and these projects go a long way toward addressing our regional transportation needs.

The TIP represents only a slice of the comprehensive 20-year Regional Transportation Plan. Implementing this program requires continued monitoring of revenue forecasts and construction costs. The recent slump in the housing industry is affecting our region in many ways, including a reduction in sales tax revenues. We will remain vigilant in analyzing program costs to ensure that revenues and expenditures remain in balance.

The MAG region is not alone in looking for ways to efficiently improve our transportation mobility. To address transportation needs on a statewide basis, MAG will join eight other Arizona Councils of Governments and Metropolitan Planning Organizations at the League of Arizona Cities and Towns Annual Conference later this month. The agencies will discuss infrastructure needs and a planning process to address these needs. We look forward to hearing the perspectives of the other regional planning agencies on the challenges they face and to join in the discussion for potential statewide solutions.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.

Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, July 25, 2007**Action Items****Final Phase Input Opportunity Report**

The Regional Council accepted the FY 2007 Final Phase Input Opportunity Report, which summarizes comments received during the Final Phase input opportunity. The Final Phase input opportunity provides the public with the opportunity to comment on the Transportation Improvement Program, Regional Transportation Plan Update, and 2007 MAG Conformity Analysis. Transcripts of comments, and staff responses, are included in the report.

During the phase, MAG participated in and cosponsored events with the Arizona Department of Transportation, Regional Public Transportation Authority (Valley Metro), and Valley Metro Rail (METRO). Various forums for input were used, including MAG policy committee meetings, information booths at a variety of special events, and a formal public hearing.

The 2007 Final Phase Input Opportunity Report is available on the MAG Web site at <http://www.mag.maricopa.gov/detail.cms?item=7556>.

For more information, please contact Jason Stephens, MAG Public Involvement Planner, (602) 254-6300.

Transportation Plans Conform to Air Quality Requirements

The MAG Regional Council approved a finding of conformity for the FY 2008-2012 MAG Transportation Plan (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan 2007 Update. The 2007 Conformity Analysis concludes that the TIP and Plan meet all applicable federal conformity requirements and are in conformance with applicable air quality plans. Approval of the conformity finding by the Regional Council is required for MAG adoption of the TIP and Plan. The finding followed a 30-day public review and comment period, as well as a public hearing conducted on June 18, 2007.

For more information, please contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Director, (602) 254-6300.

TIP and Plan Update Approved

As noted in the executive director's report above, the MAG Regional Council approved two major transportation planning documents for the region, the five-year Transportation Improvement Program covering fiscal years 2008 to 2012, and the 2007 update to the Regional Transportation Plan.

The Regional Transportation Plan 2007 Update was structured to comply with the regional transportation planning requirements of the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users

(SAFETEA-LU). New topics that respond to SAFETEA-LU include consultation on environmental mitigation and resource conservation, transportation security, and an updated public participation process. In addition, it includes revised revenue estimates and updated life cycle programs for freeways/highways, arterial streets and transit.

The TIP includes more than 1,400 projects totaling more than \$7 billion.

For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.

State Route 153 Proposed for Deletion From Transportation Plan

The Regional Council approved a proposed amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan to delete State Route 153 (Sky Harbor Expressway) from the Regional Transportation Plan and use the available funding for improvements to SR 143, subject to the necessary air quality conformity analysis. The request came after studies showed that deleting the corridor and transferring the funding would result in a better functioning freeway system by removing a freeway that does not provide the best approach for regional mobility and adding improvements to SR 143 that will improve access to and from Sky Harbor International Airport.

For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.

Paving Projects Approved

The Regional Council approved an amendment to the FY 2007-2011 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include the prioritized list of proposed PM-10 paving projects, for a total amount of \$5 million. The Regional Council noted during the vote that if additional funds are found to be available, that MAG should seek additional project proposals for inclusion in the TIP.

On May 23, 2007, the MAG Regional Council approved 13 additional measures for the Suggested List of Measures to Reduce PM-10 Particulate Matter. One of the new measures is that MAG allocate \$5 million in FY 2007 MAG federal funds, matched on a 50:50 basis by MAG member agencies, for paving dirt roads and shoulders projects. PM-10 paving projects were solicited from member agencies and 11 applications, requesting \$6.04 million in funds, were received.

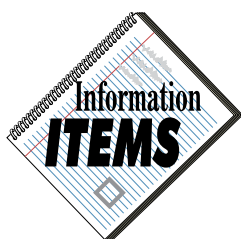
For more information, please contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Director, (602) 254-6300.

Federal Fiscal Year Final Closeout

The Regional Council approved the final closeout of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007. During the closeout process, member agencies submit a list of projects that need to be deferred to a later year due to project readiness, while at the same time submitting projects to utilize the funds that are freed up due to the deferrals.

There were 12 projects submitted to MAG for closeout funds: three projects were identified to be advanced, four projects were requested to have funds added, four were asked to be advanced and have additional funds added to their budgets, and one project was identified as new, which is a reimbursement. All projects were approved for funding using the current “unobligated” federal funds.

For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.



Information Items

Heat Relief Planning Efforts

The Regional Council was provided information on heat relief planning efforts taking place in the region. Over the last two years, dozens of homeless people have died from heat-related illnesses. Many heat-relief efforts have been put in place since that time to prevent future deaths. Municipalities are developing plans, faith-based groups are organizing volunteers, and individuals are contributing water, sun block and other critical items. To help coordinate communication, the MAG Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness has developed two maps of resources available for those in need and for those who want to help. The first map shows water collection and donation sites in the county, and is useful to people wanting to donate water and other items. The second map shows where each of the water hydration stations and refuge locations are located, where people in need can go for water and shade. The maps are available on the home page of the MAG Web site at www.mag.maricopa.gov.

For more information, please contact Amy St. Peter, MAG Human Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, August 22, 2007, at the MAG Offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include, among others, information, discussion and possible action on project(s) eligible for reimbursement under the State-wide Transportation Acceleration Needs (STAN) Account; a requested change to the ADOT program to advance right-of-way acquisition in the I-10 Reliever corridor, as well as other changes; recommended approval of the purchase of the Mesa Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility; and a discussion of the Interstate 10-Hassayampa Valley Transportation Framework Study.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.